I53.2:W24/Draft
DEPOS
631
P87-300

Warner Lakes Management Framework Plan Amendment for Wetlands, An Opportunity for Public Comment on Planning Criteria, Issues, and Preliminary Management Alternatives

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Lakeview, Oregon

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Lakeview District
1000 S. 9th
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, $300

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INT-415

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY
JUN 0 8 1987
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

BLM-OR-ES-16-1793

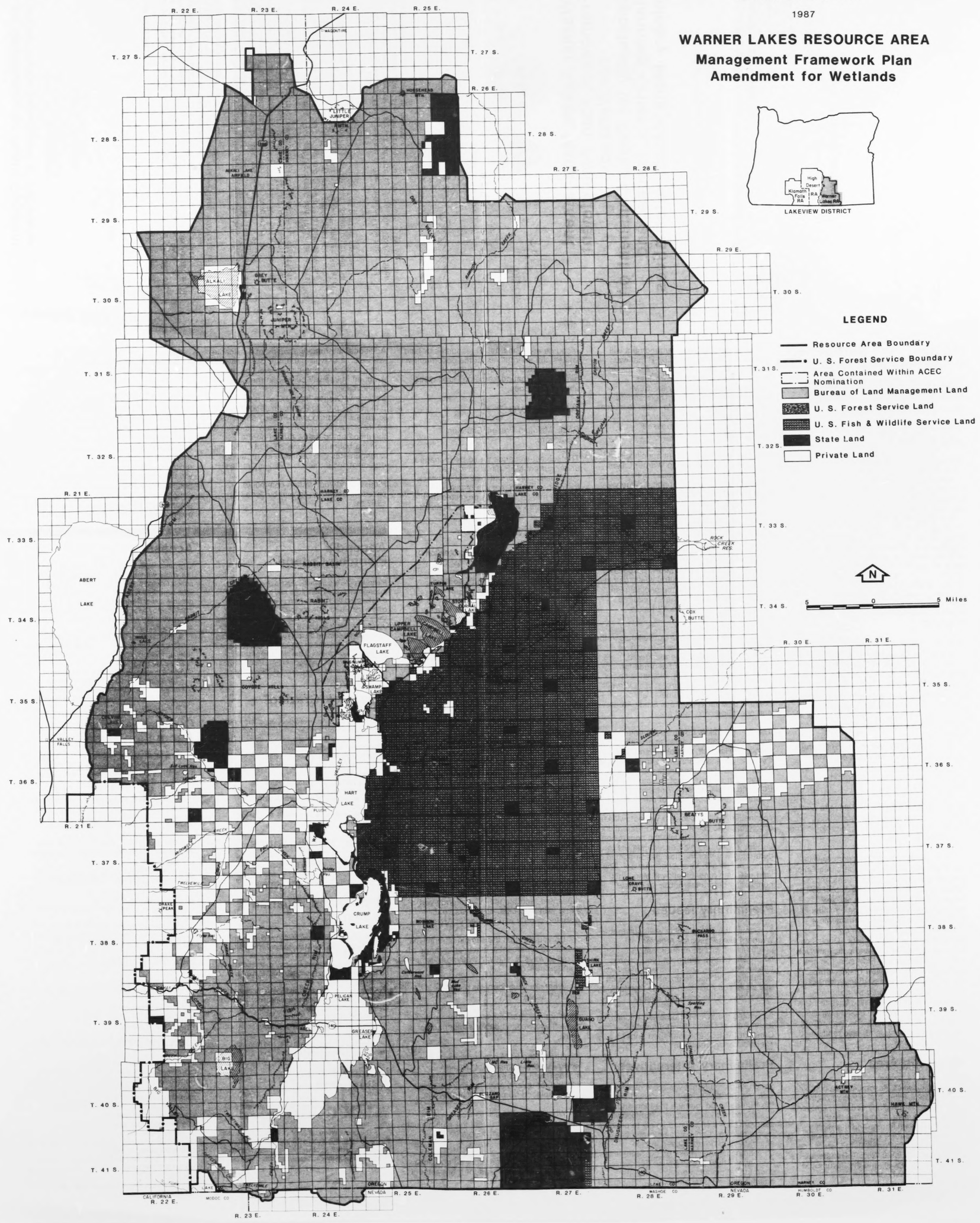
best copy available

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

LAKEVIEW DISTRICT

1987

WARNER LAKES RESOURCE AREA
Management Framework Plan Amendment for Wetlands



LEGEND

- Resource Area Boundary
- U. S. Forest Service Boundary
- Area Contained Within ACEC Nomination
- Bureau of Land Management Land
- U. S. Forest Service Land
- U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service Land
- State Land
- Private Land

best copy available

Warner Lakes Management Framework Plan Amendment

Planning Criteria, Issues, and Preliminary Management Alternatives

The Planning Process and Criteria

Planning criteria are prepared to guide the development of the MFP amendment/Environmental Assessment and ensure that it is tailored to the identified issues. The three basic purposes of planning criteria are: (1) To guide the overall process by focusing on the real issues and concerns about resource allocation conflicts, (2) to guide the development of meaningful alternatives which address the issues and provide a basis for the MFP amendment and (3) to provide a basis for the District Manager to select a preferred alternative and make decisions following the completion of the amendment. Proposed criteria for the Warner Lakes MFP amendment are shown in appendix 1.

Administration of the Bureau of Land Management's Lakeview District is guided primarily by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act fo 1976 "FLPMA" (90 Stat. 274; 43 USC 1701). FLPMA governs and directs managment activities for all lands under Bureau of Land Management jurisdiction. Among its major provisions that pertain to this amendment effort are:

1. The public lands will remain in federal ownership unless, as a result of the land use planning procedures, it is determined that disposal of a particular parcel will serve the national interest.

2. Managment activities will strive to protect scientific, scenic,historical, ecological, environmental, atmospheric, hydrologic and archeological values.

All land use alternatives will comply with Federal Laws, Executive Orders, regulations and policies relating to land uses and resource management. The application of these laws, regulations and policies automatically determines some minimum land use allocations and management practices, such as protection or enhancement of water quality. Copies of those laws, regulations and policies which are most significant to BLM activities are available at the Lakeview District Office. The plan amendment and environmental analysis will be prepared by an interdisciplinary team. Disciplines to be represented on the team include; wildlife, recreation, cultural resources, watershed, range management, lands and realty, and land use planning.

About the Area

The Warner Lakes Resource Area contains approximately 1,700,000 acres of public land in Lake and Harney counties, Oregon. The resource area is bounded by the Fremont National Forest and the High Desert Resource Area (BLM) on the west, the Susanville, California BLM District and the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada on the south, and the Burns BLM District on the east and north.

The proposed wetlands amendment will update the Warner Lakes MFP that was prepared in 1980. The 1980 plan makes land use allocations and provides management direction for the BLM administered resources. The resource allocations and direction for most resources and programs would not change significantly under the proposed amendment.

This proposed amendment specifically addresses wetlands in the Warner Lakes Resource Area. For purposes of this amendment the wetland habitat issue will be generally confined to permanently wet or intermittently flooded areas where the water table is at, near, or above the soil surface for extended intervals. Marshes, shallows, swamps, shallow lakes, and lake bogs are examples of wetlands. The proposed limited re-allocation of wetland resources would lead to local impacts that are beyond the scope of the original MFP. Proposals for acquisition of non-federal wetlands may be beyond the scope of the original plan. Designation of an ACEC also requires consideration through the Bureau's planning process.

Other resources found on public lands in the Resource Area include; wildlife habitat, including threatened or endangered species habitat; recreational areas for fishing, hunting, camping, etc.; grazing lands, and cultural resources. The Warner Lakes Resource Area contains all, or portions of eight Wilderness Study Areas, and one wild horse herd area.

The Warner Lakes Potholes Allotment is an area of some 39,268 acres in and about the vicinity of Flagstaff, Campbell, and Stone Corral lakes and channels near these lakes. The area has been nominated for designation as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Analysis of the resources and application of the Bureau's review criteria for ACEC supports the nomination for the following values: wildlife, ecologic, geologic, cultural, and recreation. The next step is to evaluate the nomination through a land use plan or amendment to determine whether the nomination should or should not lead to formal designation. The land use plan amendment will place this nomination before the public for review.

Preliminary Issues

1. Should the BLM identify wetlands in the Warner Lakes Resource Area for predominant wildlife and recreation potential, such as waterfowl production, habitat protection, and recreation uses such as hunting and wildlife observation. Such use could constrain or preclude livestock allocations on the assigned lands.

2. Should the Warner Potholes be identified as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and managed under a specific management plan?

Preliminary Alternatives

Land use plan alternatives are a means of arraying and analyzing the potential ways the Bureau could manage the land and associated resource values. The following alternatives are suggested solely to provide a general format and scope of potential alternatives to be addressed in the MFP amendment. These do not represent fixed alternatives the BLM has decided upon for the planning analysis. As the amendment will deal only with permanent or intermittently flooded wetlands in the resource area, and not all resources or land values, the alternatives for the document will be constrained compared to a plan amendment that addresses all land types and all resources.

Alternative 1

Goal: Maintain Present Situation (no action).

The subject wetlands would be managed under current MFP direction with a continuation of current levels of livestock forage production, season of use, etc.. Wildlife habitat would be protected and managed as viable under this constraint.

Alternative 2

Goal: Emphasize maximum protection of wildlife habitat (with an emphasis on waterfowl) and watershed values on permanently or intermittently flooded wetlands.

Livestock would be removed or levels constrained to maximize vegetative cover in the area for waterfowl feeding, nesting and escape habitat. Recreation use would also be controlled or limited during the nesting season to reduce or eliminate conflict with waterfowl production.

Alternative 3

Goal: Maximize protection of wildlife habitat (with emphasis on waterfowl habitat), while continuing to utilize other existing resources.

This alternative would manage livestock numbers, seasons of use, etc. to afford a greater level of habitat for waterfowl, and allow recreation such as hunting and wildlife oberservation to take place. Other uses would be monitored and evaluated to determine impacts, if any, on the primary goal.

What We Would Like You To Do

We ask that you consider and comment on the preliminary issues that have been presented, and the tentative alternatives along with the goals, objectives, and planning criteria as identified in Appendix I.

Do you feel that the sample alternatives presented represent a reasonable range of possible ways to analyze wetland habitat management?

What are your concerns on these wetland areas?

What resource values are present that make these wetland habitats important to you?

Should the BLM acquire suitable non-federal land to compliment wetland management (For example; additional wetland, or upland areas to accomodate uses displaced from the wetland area)?

What other alternatives would you suggest for analysis to meet the multiple use objectives identified in this plan amendment?

Should the BLM consider co-operative management agreements for management of wetlands areas?

Additional information, copies of applicable laws etc., are available in the BLM Lakeview District Office during normal working hours. An open house will be held in the Lakeview District Office, 1000 south Ninth Street, Lakeview, Oregon from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on June 10, 1987 to review this proposal. Public comments, concerns, and/or questions may be given to the office noted below during normal working hours until June 30, 1987. Special arrangements can be made for groups or organizations if there is sufficient interest.

Please send your written comments, concerns and/or questions by June 30, 1987 to:

Lakeview District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

After you have had a chance to review and comment, we will prepare a more detailed list of issues, resource objectives and alternatives. Public review of this document will be incorporated with existing information to guide the preparation of the proposed plan amendment and environmental assessment. This document will then be published and available for public review and comment for a 45 day period in the fall of 1987. The proposed plan amendment decisions should be ready for public review in the winter of 1987-88.

Appendix 1 Planning Criteria

Planning criteria set out the legal parameters and management goals that guide and direct the development of the Plan Ammendment. These criteria are based upon applicable laws, Executive Orders, Departmental and Bureau policies, and then developed and revised with public participation and interagency coordination to assure that the planning process stays focused on the issues. The criteria will be used at four stages of the planning process: resource inventory, management situation analysis, formulation of alternatives, and selection of the preferred alternatives.

Livestock Grazing

Current grazing levels were developed through the Warner Lakes MFP, the Lakview (District-wide) Grazing Managment Environmental Impact Statement, and the subsequent Record of Decision. Current program direction is set forth in the Range Program Summary of January 1987. The plan amendment should consider:

- The impacts of livestock grazing and Allotment Management Plans(AMP's) on wildlife habitat, wetlands, watershed; and the impacts of meeting wildlife habitat, watershed, and recreation needs on grazing management.

Special Designations

The amendment will follow the guidance for identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and designating Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Wildlife and Riparian Habitat

The amendment will follow guidance outlined in the BLM Directors Riparian Management Policy dated January 22, 1987. The plan should consider:

- The impacts of livestock grazing, and other uses on special habitat, and important wildlife habitat conditions;
- The impacts of riparian and special habitat, and important wildlife habitat management decisions on livestock operations, and recreation pursuits;
- The cost and public attituide toward the availability of areas for management; and
- The compatibility of BLM land and resource management with adjacent landowners.

Land Ownership Adjustment

Exchange will generally be the preferred means of land ownership adjustment. The plan should consider:

- The surrounding ownership, adjacent land uses, the need for public access, and the public attitude; and consistency with other federal, state, and local natural resource related plans, programs, and policies.

Access

In general, larger tracts of public land with high multiple use values will receive higher management and project funding priority over smaller isolated tracts, unless a critical resource need is identified and documented or the tract has high public values as expressed by public concern. All access needs shall be prioritized by each resource activity. The plan should consider:

- The impacts of the type of physical access (vehicular vs nonvehicular) on wildlife habitat, ACEC, recreation values, and geologically sensitive areas that require a high degree of management to prevent loss of resource value or to prevent degradation.
- The size of the tract, resource values, costs, compatibility with adjoining land uses, and the need for public access; and availability of existing access to the public lands.

Cultural, Aesthetic, and Recreation Resources

Planning for motorized vehicle use should follow the guidance outlined in Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 for off-road vehicle designations. The plan should consider:

- The impacts of motorized use on wildlife habitat, watershed, nonmotorized recreation uses, livestock mangement and range improvements;
- The compatiblity with adjoining land uses.
- The public attitude.
- The amount of existing motorized use, and motorized use necessary for program management and maintenance.

Recreational Facilities

The plan should consider:

- The costs and demands of providing facilities and opportunities;
- The compatiblity with adjacent land uses; and
- The impacts of recreation activities on wildlife habitat, range use, and watershed.

Scenic Values

The plan should consider:

- The compatiblitiy and consistency with adjacent land uses.
- The impacts of scenic management decisions on range management, public attitudes, and exisiting visual resource ratings.

Cultural and Historic Sites

The plan amendment should address the requirements of the National Register of Historic Places(36 CFR 60,63), and the requirements for the protection of historic and cultural properties (36 CFR 800). The plan should consider;

- Public attitudes and amount of visitor use.
- The cost of mangement.
- The impacts on other resource values.
- The compatibility with adjacent land uses.
- The impacts of nonmanagement on recreation, cultural and historic values.
- The impacts on sites from other uses such as motorized travel, other recreation, livestock grazing, etc..
- The relationship to national, state, and regional significance, and user attraction.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1987—791-032 61,002 REGION NO. 10

best copy available

An Opportunity for Public Comment
United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
LAKEVIEW DISTRICT OFFICE
P.O. Box 151
Lakeview, OR 97630
(505) 9947-2177

May 15, 1987

Dear Concerned Citizen:

The Lakeview District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), is in the process of initiating a plan amendment to our existing Warner Lakes Resource Area Management Framework Plan (MFP) on wetland habitats. This plan amendment will establish (or reconfirm) specific land use allocations and management direction of wetland habitats within the Warner Lakes Resource Area. This planning process will result in decisions as to how wetland habitats will be managed to provide maximum public benefit.

The planning process is designed to enable the BLM to accommodate the uses the public wants to make of the public lands while complying with laws established by the Congress and policies implemented by the executive branch of the Federal Government. The plan amendment process will be completed in accordance with the BLM planning regulations, 43 CFR 1610.5. This document provides an opportunity for public input concerning future management, and is part of our commitment to citizen involvement and interagency coordination.

This newsletter provides an opportunity for public input and includes a list of preliminary issues, draft planning criteria, and possible alternatives. Your comments will aid the planning team in forming management options and preparing an environmental assessment (EA). A draft amendment and an EA will be completed and available for a 45 day public review and comment period in the fall of 1987. A proposed decision should be ready for public review in winter 1987/1988.

We invite you to carefully and critically examine the information and send your comments to us at the Lakeview District Office by June 30, 1987. When making your comments, please indicate whether or not you would like to receive future mailings concerning this plan amendment.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry E. Asher

Jerry E. Asher
District Manager

best copy available